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montana committee for the humanities newsletter

vol.9, no. 2 december 1982

Heartland Now Available Through MCH Mini-Grants

MCH now owns a print of *Heartland*, that stirring and unromanticized movie about homesteading in the West, filmed in Montana and produced by Montanans Beth Ferris and Annick Smith under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Committee urges you to take advantage of this welcome addition to its film library.

To do so, you'll need to follow different procedures from those for borrowing other MCH films. Unlike other MCH film holdings, *Heartland* is not available through the Instructional Materials Service (IMS) at the University of Montana. Because it can be used only for discussion programs that involve a humanities scholar, borrowing MCH's print of the film will mean going through the MCH grant application process.

This should present no stumbling block. MCH readily awarded a mini-grant for a proposal to present *Heartland* at 10 different nursing/retirement homes in Yellowstone, Carbon, Stillwater and Big Horn counties.

If you're interested in working up a program using the 90-minute, 35 mm. film, write to MCH for the new one-page application form and a list of humanities scholars. We at MCH encourage you to apply. This fine film deserves a wide audience.

How Are We Doing?

Those of us working for the Committee devote most of our efforts to telling Montanans what we have been doing when instead we need to be asking "How are we doing?" Of course, we have a few ways to gauge how we're doing: we review the number and variety of proposals received and projects funded; we gather evaluations about the projects we support; we ask project directors to assess our work as well as their own projects; we receive reports of individual conversations from MCH members and staff; we get evaluations from NEH based on information that we submit and that they acquire about us.

Still, we have no regular way to find out what our reputation around Montana is. As a *Newsletter* reader, you know a lot about what we fund, about special projects and the like. You may have directed, hosted, sponsored, or taken part in one or more MCH-supported projects in your area. You may have seen television programs or exhibits that MCH funded. You may have talked with MCH members or staff.

So we'd like you to tell us how you think we're doing. What do we do well or not so well in promoting the humanities around Montana? We'd like to know what you'd like us to do more of, or better; what you'd like us to do less of, or not at all. We'd like to know what you see as the proper role for MCH; what you'd like to see us work toward as we move on through the 1980's.

Because you'll no doubt wonder whether writing to us will be worth your effort, we want to underline here that the members and staff of the Committee will read individually each letter we receive. And your letters will influence our evaluation meeting in January.

Experts often say that requests like this usually do not generate much response. Defy them. Write to us. We want to hear from you.

Thanks in advance for helping.

Excellence Rewarded

The Montana Committee for the Humanities has recently received the NEH Chairman's Award for Excellence. Of 48 state humanities councils to apply, only five states received an award. Dr. William Bennett, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, wrote Dean Mary Blew of Northern Montana College, Chairman of the MCH, "I am confident that your project . . . will enable citizens of Montana to learn a great deal about the substance and methods of the humanities and will provide scholars with an opportunity to do significant work."

The excellence award grants MCH up to $68,000 for a radio humanities series called "Reflections in Montana," designed to respond to Montanans' keen interest in local history and traditions. The 12 half-hour programs will feature scholars from all around the state analyzing, among other topics, Montana folklore and tales, the history and culture of Montana Indian tribes, implications and consequences of the new state Constitution, Montana fiction writers and artists, state settlement patterns, trade relations and changing political climates.

Radio's cost-effectiveness and its suitability for packaged programs provided the impetus for the proposal, which MCH developed in conjunction with staff members of KUFM, the University of Montana's National Public Radio affiliate, and KEMC, the NPR affiliate at Eastern Montana College. Although the Committee hopes that commercial stations in Montana also will broadcast these 12 half-hour programs, it plans to develop 3½-minute and 15-minute segments that may be particularly attractive to commercial radio.

MCH Funds Innovative *Corona III*

We'd like to call your attention to an item in this Newsletter's grant summary: *Corona III* Sound Sheet Insert. We're highlighting it here simply to let you know that even though MCH awards the bulk of its grants to more conventional projects—conferences here, workshops there, a museum project somewhere else, the Committee certainly doesn't shy away from an innovative project when a good one like this comes along.

To describe this project, perhaps we should begin with what *Corona* is. According to its editors, *Corona*, put out by the Department of History and Philosophy at MSU, "is a new journal for those who are willing to see boundaries as entrances and ends as beginnings." Two years ago MCH helped establish *Corona* through its Gifts and Matching arrangements with the National Endowment for the Humanities. Since then *Corona* has earned national recognition as a quality innovative journal with its first two issues, *Corona I* and *Corona II*.

Coming out soon will be *Corona III*. Inserted inside the back cover of each copy will be a vinyl sound sheet—a floppy record, in other words.

To insert a record inside a magazine is unusual. But even more unusual is the recording itself. One side of the sound sheet presents Sam Windy Boy of Rocky Boys Reservation singing "Mourning Song for the Buffalo." The flip side features Neva Pilgrim, soprano, performing "Speeches for Dr. Frankenstein," a work written for her and computer. With this blend of tradition and transition, Native American and avant-garde, the record intends to provoke investigation of music that falls outside the mainstream and to stimulate thinking about music as an expression of our humanity.

To accompany the *Corona* record, *Corona III* will have three essays explaining how the music relates to the culture that produced it. An essay each by Sam Windy Boy and Neva Pilgrim will describe the origin and technique of his/her piece. Their essays will give background information for an essay by composer Marvin Lamb which discusses music as a model of human response to cultural change. *Corona* plans to order additional copies for distribution to schools, libraries and Montana radio stations. Watch for them!

Grant Summary

In the past several months the following grants have been awarded:

Perspectives on the Environment, sponsored by the Bridger Environmental Education Program. $9,305.

Incest: No Longer a Secret . . . But a Community Problem, sponsored by Montana Incest Prevention Coalition, Women's Resource Center, Women's Place, Women's Law Caucus, U.M. Sociology Department. (Final figure to be identified following discussion with project director re speakers' travel.)

Corona Record, Featuring Sam Windy Boy and Neva Pilgrim, sponsored by *Corona*. $3,341.

Montana Week in Review, sponsored by Montana Week in Review Advisory Board. $10,000.

The Phantom Cowboy, sponsored by The Watershed Foundation and the Student Action Center, University of Montana. $6,046.

Making Peace a Reality, sponsored by the Student Action Center, University of Montana. (Final figure to be identified following discussion with project director re speakers' travel.)

Jeannette Rankin: The Woman Who Voted No, sponsored by The Fine Tuning Company (Outreach phase). $4,978.

Planning a Humanities Project

As you may recall, our last *Newsletter* stressed that MCH, in spite of cuts in federal spending, still has funds for worthy humanities projects. We want you to apply for these funds. And because we hope you'll apply and we want your project to succeed, we've devoted some space here to suggestions to help you begin planning.

Know the Ground Rules

If you've reached the planning stage of a humanities project, you already have a topic in mind, presumably. But it may be a somewhat nebulous one that could possibly take several directions. To make our job at MCH easier and to better your chances for shaping a fundable grant proposal, you'll want to keep in mind a few basic questions.

First, because the definition of "humanities" seems to vary a good deal, we think it wise to state here what we at MCH take the humanities to be: those branches of knowledge that deal with men and women as social and moral beings; with what it has been and is to be human, to make choices and value judgments. *Does your project have a humanities focus?*

Next, *does your project include at least one professional humanities scholar?* To get a grant from MCH, your proposal must include someone who devotes his or her professional life to the study of history, literature, philosophy, ethics, comparative religion, languages, linguistics, jurisprudence, archaeology, history and criticism of the arts, or certain aspects of the social sciences.

Then, consider whether your topic, besides conforming to our notion of humanities and including the required humanities scholar, stresses contemporary issues. *Does your intended topic relate to the interests of your target audience?* Something billed as "A Humanities Program" may attract limited interest. A program entitled "Coping with Change" or, another example, "My Rights vs. Their Needs" may have wider appeal. *Make sure, though, that your program will deal objectively with the issue, won't try to propagandize, and will not be action oriented.*

Form a Steering Committee

A typical steering committee consists of five or six people, including a project director, a fiscal agent, a humanities scholar, a promotion/publicity chairman, a representative of the sponsoring and cosponsoring organizations, and a representative of your target audience. This group forms the nucleus of your project and will see it through from beginning to end.

But don't feel that you must limit involvement to this handful of people, particularly in your planning stages. The more people you include as you plan, the more likely it will be that your program will succeed because people involved in the planning stages will be more committed to its success. Include everyone who has an interest in the topic and can help spread this interest to a wider group.

Define the Responsibilities of Each Committee Member

Here are some general guidelines. Change them or expand them to suit your specific needs.

Project Director. You can define the responsibilities of project director as narrowly or as broadly as you wish. The project director has ultimate responsibility for the project. S/he cannot assume that by delegating responsibilities to other members s/he has done her/his job.

S/he should, first of all, make out a detailed schedule that coordinates the activities involved in preparing the proposal and administering the grant. S/he must supervise her/his committee and coordinate its activities. S/he also serves as the main liaison among project personnel, the sponsoring organization(s) and the MCH office. At the end of the project s/he will submit a final report.

This is a big order. For that reason MCH sends the director a Project Director's Checklist that breaks the task down into manageable chunks.

The *Fiscal Agent* receives and disburses funds and keeps auditable records of all income, expenditures and in-kind contributions (non-cash contributions that can be assigned a cash value—a gift of one's time, the use of a typewriter, a free "spot" on a local radio station and the like). The fiscal agent must be someone who has had formal training and experience with bookkeeping or accounting. Though MCH doesn't require monthly financial reports, it does require periodic reports for projects that extend beyond three months. At the end of the project, the fiscal agent will submit a final report summing up all the project expenditures. Even though finances and record-keeping can cause lots of headaches, filing the financial reports will be easy if the fiscal agent insists on collecting receipts for every expenditure.

The project director and the fiscal agent whose signatures appear on the MCH grant application cover sheet are *legally* responsible for the conduct of the grant.

The *Humanities Scholars* are really the heart of your steering committee, and help to ensure that the substance and form of the project focus on the humanities. They can suggest ways to use the humanities, humanistic themes to explore and how, and publications, films, and other resources that might be used in the program. The humanities scholars also suggest scholars the steering committee might invite to provide the humanities perspectives and usually make the initial contacts. The MCH office has information on file about available scholars.

Promotion/Publicity Chairman. This person produces

(Continued on Page 4)

Humanities Project . . .

(Continued From Page 3)

and coordinates publicity—public service announcements for radio and TV, posters, flyers, invitations and the like. This job is critical: community interest in your project increases in direct proportion to your promotional efforts. MCH doesn't insist on enormous audiences, but the Committee does expect that everyone interested in the program is not only informed about it, but invited.

Representatives from the Sponsoring and Cosponsoring Organizations promote the project within their respective groups and advise the steering committee on topics or themes, formats, scheduling and local resources. One of them may be put in charge of fundraising; another, room arrangements for the program, or transportation and accommodations for any out-of-town guests, receptions, audio-visual equipment if needed, and so on.

The *Representative of your Target Audience*, as the voice of the community, ensures that your program speaks to community interests, experience and capabilities. S/he can also be expected to know the best times for your program—times that don't conflict with other community activities.

Involve Your Committee in the Proposal Writing

The entire steering committee should read through the application materials and take part in writing the proposal. In other words, each member should write up for the committee those aspects of the project for which s/he is primarily responsible. For instance, the fiscal agent should lay out the budget, the promotion chairman should explain the promotion strategy and schedule, the humanities scholar, how the humanities will be used in the project, and so on. This will make the project a collaborative effort that people will support because it is theirs. Also as you write your proposal, seek input from people whose views may be important, but who may not have the time or commitment to be a part of the steering committee.

Proceed on an "As-If" Basis

Tackle your project as if it were funded—but with the clear understanding that it might not be. This will require you and your committee to pin down clear statements about the substance, form and timing of events, and the participation of presenters, panelists, etc.

Allow Yourself Plenty of Lead Time

We recommend that you submit a draft of your proposal at lest two weeks before the application deadline. The MCH staff will review it and make comments and suggestions based upon its experience with humanities projects. Then you can write your final draft and submit the required number of copies. Be sure to send each major presenter a copy of your proposal narrative and budget.

It takes several weeks to process, review, and act on regular grant requests (less than $10,000). Once MCH approves a proposal for funding, it needs still more time to notify applicants and to complete the preliminary paperwork before funds can be released.

If and when you as grantee receive MCH funds, your steering committee should spend at least four weeks promoting the program to ensure a good audience. Plan, then, on about 90 days between your application deadline and the date of your first public program.

Keep in Touch

Please call the MCH office if you have any suggestions. The staff will be glad to help you. Also, all 19 MCH members are eager to help you in any way they can, so feel welcome to contact any of them. The MCH application form lists their names.

Help is Available

MCH field humanists are available to assist you in planning a project. Just write the MCH office requesting such assistance.

NEH Makes Media Catalog Available

If you're a teacher, librarian, museum coordinator or community group leader looking for exciting humanities programs, you can send for a free copy of NEH's new *MediaLog*. A catalog of programs that NEH has supported, *MediaLog* describes more than 315 film, radio and TV productions in seven general areas of the humanities: United States History; Archaeology and Anthropology; Folk Traditions and Local History; World Culture and History; History, Theory and Criticism of the Arts; the Humanities in Literature; and Philosophy, Religion and Ethics. The descriptions include information about length, content, format, distributor and, in most cases, rental and/or purchase fees.

To get a copy of *MediaLog*, fill out the form below and mail it to the National Endowment for the Humanities, Public Affairs Office, 806-15th Street, Northwest, Washington, D.C. 20506.

Please send one free copy of *MediaLog* to:

Name

Organization

Address

Zip Code

Calendar of Forthcoming MCH Events

DATE	LOCATION	GRANT TITLE
December 3, 1982	Billings Senior Citizens Center 1:00 p.m.	"Homesteaders"
December 15, 1982	Billings Yellowstone County Nursing Home—1:00 p.m.	"Homesteaders"
December 17, 1982	Billings Yellowstone County Nursing Home—10:00 a.m.	"Homesteaders"
February 18, 1983	Bozeman Willson Auditorium 7:30 p.m. Jean Craighead George, speaker "Children and the World of Nature"	"Perspectives on the Environment"
March, 1983	Libby	"Incest: No Longer a Secret . . . But a Community Problem"
March 11, 1982	Bozeman Willson Auditorium 7:30 p.m. Ann and Myron Sutton, speakers "Great National Parks of the World"	Perspectives on the Environment"
April, 1983	Billings	"Incest: No Longer a Secret . . . But a Community Problem"
April, 1983	Livingston	"Incest: No Longer a Secret . . . But a Community Problem"
April, 1983	Butte	"Incest: No Longer a Secret . . . But a Community Problem"
April 10, 1983	Bozeman Willson Auditorium 7:30 p.m. Peter Matthiesen, speaker "The Indian Way and the Environment"	"Perspectives on the Environment"
May, 1983	Glasgow	"Incest: No Longer a Secret . . . But a Community Problem"
May, 1983	Glendive	"Incest: No Longer a Secret . . . But a Community Problem"

Correction

The grant summary in the September MCH *Newsletter* stated that the "Homesteaders" grant was sponsored by Eastern Montana College Psychology and Gerontology Departments. That was incorrect. The Ad Hoc Committee for *Heartland* sponsored that grant.

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